generating from the raw image, including employing a first quantizing step, a

first compressed image data set suitable for reproducing the image at a first quality

level; and

generating from the raw image, including employing a second quantizing step

independent of the first quantizing step, a second compressed image data set which

when combined with the first compressed image data set reproduces the image at a

second, higher quality level.

11.     The method of claim 10, wherein the step of generating a first compressed

image data set comprises JPEG compression.

12.     The method of claim 10, further comprising:

storing the first compressed image data set in an image storage device; and

storing the second compressed image data set in the image storage device if

space is available.

13.     The method of claim 12, wherein the steps of generating the first and second

compressed image data sets are performed by first and second quantizers.

14.     The method of claim 10, wherein the image storage device includes primary

and secondary storage areas, the method further comprising:

releasing space in the secondary storage area of the image storage device if

insufficient space is available in the primary storage area of the image storage device

to store the first compressed image data set.

15.     The method of claim 15, wherein the step of releasing space in the secondary storage area of the image storage device releases space in a first in first out order.

16.     The method of claim 15, wherein the step of releasing space in the secondary storage area of the image storage device releases space in a last in first out order.

17.     The method of claim 15, wherein each compressed image data set stored in the secondary storage area has associated with it an image quality metric and the step of releasing space in the secondary storage area of the image storage device releases space in lowest image quality first order.

18.     A system of processing images in a digital camera comprising:

        means for inputting a raw image;

        means for generating from the raw image, including employing a first quantizing step, a first compressed image data set suitable for reproducing the image at a first quality level; and

        means for generating from the raw image, including employing a second quantizing step independent of the first quantizing step, a second compressed image data set which when combined with the first compressed image data set reproduces the image at a second, higher quality level.

19.     The system of claim 18, wherein the means for generating a first compressed image data set comprises JPEG compression means.

20.     The system of claim 18, further comprising:

means for storing the first compressed image data set in an image storage

device; and

means for storing the second compressed image data set in the image storage

device if space is available.

21.     The system of claim 20, wherein the means for generating the first compressed

image data set and the means for generating the second compressed image data set

comprise first and second quantizers.

22.     The system of claim 18, wherein the image storage device includes primary

and secondary storage areas, the system further comprising:

means for releasing space in the secondary storage area of the image storage

device if insufficient space is available in the primary storage area of the image

storage device to store the first compressed image data set.

23.     The system of claim 22, wherein the means for releasing space in the

secondary storage area of the image storage device releases space in a first in first out

order.

24.     The system of claim 22, wherein the means for releasing space in the

secondary storage area of the image storage device releases space in a last in first out

order.

25.     The system of claim 22, wherein each compressed image data set in the

secondary storage area has associated with it an image quality metric and the means

for releasing space in the secondary storage area of the image storage device releases

space in lowest image quality first order.

26. A system for processing images in a digital camera comprising:

an image storage device; and

a processing unit configured to transfer raw image data from an input device,

generate a first compressed image data set from the raw image, including employing a

first quantizing step, and generate a second compressed image data set, including

employing a second quantizing step independent of the first quantizing step, store the

first compressed image data set in the image storage device, and store the second

compressed image data set in the image storage device if space is available.

27. The system of claim 26 wherein the processor unit is configured to perform

JPEG compression to generate the first compressed image data set and the second

compressed image data set.

28. The system of claim 26, wherein the processing unit comprises a first

quantizer configured to generate the first compressed image data set and a second

quantizer configured to generate the second compressed image data set.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein the image storage device comprises primary

and secondary storage areas, and the processing unit is further configured to release

space in the secondary storage areas of the image storage device if insufficient space is

available in the primary storage area of the image storage device to store the first

compressed image data set.

30.     The system of claim 29, wherein the processing unit is configured to release

space in secondary storage area of the image storage device in a first in first out order.

31.     The system of claim 29, wherein the processing unit is configured to release

space in secondary storage area of the image storage device in a last in first out order.

32.     The system of claim 29, wherein each compressed image data set in the

secondary storage area has associated with it an image quality metric and the

processing unit is configured to release space in the secondary storage area of the

image storage device in lowest image quality first order.